

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of Australia
October 25, 2023

President Biden. Well, Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. Welcome to the White House, welcome to the Oval Office. It's been a long time in coming.

And I—well, let me apologize again for not being able to make my visit to Australia. Things were a little bit in disarray here and required to be home. And so that's why I didn't. But I'm delighted you're here.

And together, you know, we've worked together to really strengthen the alliance, and I think we've actually deepened that strength. I think we've moved in a direction that—through our historic AUKUS partnership with the United Kingdom, and we've expanded economic involvement with one another, with American investment in Australia being at an alltime high under our administration.

And in May, we strengthened our climate ties—and thank you, thank you, thank you for your move on climate; it's a big deal—including launching a new climate, minerals, and clean energy compact, because you have great assets that we can all use to make sure that we move in the direction of clean energy. And today we're taking our alliance even further with doubling down on cooperation on technology and science.

This morning we're going to discuss how all these efforts can help advance a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific. And I look forward to discussing how we can work together to address threats to the stability in the region and the economic stability as well, supporting Ukraine in the face of Russia's bitter aggression, and to stand with Israel in the wake of Hamas's appalling terrorist attacks.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you very much for being here. It's an honor to have you. And thank you for your leadership and your personal friendship.

Prime Minister Albanese. Well, thank you very much, Mr. President. It is a great honor for me to be here as Australia's Prime Minister.

And our alliance, I believe, has never been more important, and it's also never been stronger. We've added a third tier. We have had defense, and we've had the economic relationship—defense through ANZUS, the economic relationship through our free trade agreement.

But we've added a third part of this alliance front and center as well through our clean energy, critical minerals, and climate change compact, taking action to protect the world, to lower emissions, to take advantage of the shift to clean energy that—the opportunity that presents to grow economies as well and to decouple—particularly for developing nations—to allow them to develop in a way at the same time as they're reducing emissions. And breaking that nexus between industrialization and emissions is so important.

The AUKUS agreement is so central. And I thank you, Mr. President, for the work that you've done in persuading legislators to make sure that we put in place the measures that are necessary to encourage that two-way transfer of defense technology that will be at the center of an agreement that's about peace and security in our region, but also about prosperity in our region as well.

In addition to that, the work that we're doing together in the Pacific is very important. And I know that you've hosted Pacific leaders twice here in the White House, and that has been very welcome.

In today's uncertain world, the alliance between Australia and the United States and the way that we stand steadfast against aggression, whether it be Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine or whether it be Hamas's terrorist attack on Israel, is something that can be relied upon for us to stand up for our common values.

And that's why I very much welcome this visit and welcome the cooperation that we're having, as well as our personal relationship. This is our ninth meeting in just the 16 months that I've had the honor of being Prime Minister, and I look forward to continuing to take the relationship to a higher level, as we do every time we meet.

Today we'll be advancing a technology agreement between our two great nations as well. And innovation is so important—that we're able to commercialize it to benefit both of our peoples.

I thank you.

President Biden. Well, you've made one member of my administration incredibly happy with your strong move toward environmental protection. That's Secretary Kerry.

Prime Minister Albanese. Indeed. *[Laughter]* Indeed. And he's shown great leadership, of course.

President Biden. Well, he is. He's really——

Prime Minister Albanese. And it is so important for us.

The other area of our cooperation is, of course, in working on natural disasters. Later, I'll be visiting your emergency management authority. We've set up a similar model nationally based upon what you've done here, because climate change is real, and we can see its impacts with wildfires, with floods.

And that is just a reminder every time that we have a responsibility to this and future generations.

President Biden. Well, I was asked by Xi Jinping a couple years ago why I was working so hard with your country. And I said, "Because we're a Pacific nation." He looked at me, and I said, "Yes, we're a Pacific nation—the United States." We are, and we're going to stay that way.

So thank you. Thank you, everyone.

Prime Minister Albanese. Certainly.

Thank you.

[At this point, several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Q. Mr. President, on Israel, will you respond to attacks on U.S. troops in the region? Will you respond to attacks on U.S. troops in the region, Mr. President?

President Biden. Whoa, whoa, whoa—well, you're going to get—we're going to have a press conference after this. We'll be able to answer your questions.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:56 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Special Presidential Envoy on Climate John F. Kerry; and President Xi Jinping of China.

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